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LABOUR ORGANISER

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BELPER C.L.P. requires the services of a full-time Secretary/Agent. Salary and conditions in accordance with the National Agreement, but higher salary to a qualified and experienced person. Housing accommodation could be made available. Application forms from Mr. D. J. Robertson, The Labour Hall, New Road, Belper, to whom they should be returned not later than 30th September, 1958.

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THE LABOUR PARTY — PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

EDITOR: A. L. WILLIAMS

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PRICE FIVEPENCE

General Election Strategy

THE growing possibility of a General Election within the next few months raises the question of the strategy to be employed in this big clash of personalities, parties and policies. The Tory strategy seems pretty obvious. They must build up Mr. Macmillan as a great statesman and, with the assistance of the Tory Press, they are making desperate efforts to do this already. Also, they must create the impression that he is backed by an impressive group of first-rate Ministers. This will be a more difficult job, because even the names of most are not known to the ordinary elector and those who have had publicity have not been at all inspiring.

As usual, the hoardings and the Press will play a prominent part in the campaign of ballyhoo, and it is certain that there will be a full exploitation of the greatly increased facilities to be made available by television and radio in this General Election.

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All the same, the Tories are likely to conduct a quiet campaign in the constituencies. First of all, because their record compared with their promises is such a bad one that they are anxious to avoid too much attention being paid to it. Secondly, because their more efficient electoral organisation nearly always favours a quiet campaign: usually they can secure a good turn out of Tory supporters without making a noise and arousing the Opposition. (Their failure to do this in recent by-

elections created panic in the breasts of their leaders.)

The outcome of the General Election will be determined in some 200 constituencies where the majority was 5,000 or less, and it won't matter if there is a fall in the aggregate Tory vote, if majorities are cut in Tory strongholds, and if there are bigger majorities in Labour strongholds, so long as there is a Tory Government. In 1955, they were able to transfer considerable numbers of workers from safe seats to the marginal constituencies, especially in London. This is so obviously a sound tactic that they are likely to do it again on an extended scale.

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What should the Labour Party do? The first thing is to make clear that the Party is united behind its leaders and has a practical and imaginative programme to meet the problems of the times. This involves a much greater propaganda effort in the localities than has been made so far.

In the constituencies the problem facing the Labour Party is basically the same as that facing the Tories: the hundred Labour marginal seats must be held and the hundred Tory marginals must be won. Some people imagine that the Liberals will do the job for us, but too much reliance must not be placed on the intervention of Liberal candidates.

There may not be as many Liberal candidates as we have been led to believe there would be, and there may be more local pacts. In some Labour constituencies the absence of a Liberal would be

dangerous, and in others the absence of a Tory would be even more dangerous, whereas in some Tory seats a Liberal might draw some of the support which otherwise would have gone to Labour.

Marginal seats were not won last time because of our inability to get as high a proportion of Labour supporters to the poll as the Tories were theirs. This was the main point in the Wilson Report, and since then attention has been focused on improving organisation in those constituencies so as to obtain complete records of the Labour supporters and to devise the necessary means of persuading them to go out and vote.

Considerable progress has been made in this task, but there is still a great deal to be done, and there is always a tendency to drop the mundane jobs of canvassing and recording for more glamorous activities as an election approaches.

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No party in a marginal constituency should be satisfied unless it can enter the election with a marked register, showing the number of promises needed to win the seat. New methods of recording the canvass results and calling up voters have been adopted in many places, largely as a result of the prominence given to the 'Reading' system in the *Labour Organiser* and elsewhere, and because of the committee room material supplied under the Regional Schemes.

But even the most modern machine is useless unless there are sufficient workers who have been trained to use it. The recruiting of election workers and their training in the new techniques should be undertaken *now*. It will be too late if it is left until the fight is on.

In the past few General Elections, Labour workers have been concerned with putting up the best possible fight in each constituency, and this showed itself in the enormous total of votes secured. The Labour vote in 1951 was a record for any political party in British history, but the Labour Government was beaten.

The obvious thing to do is to transfer most of the workers from the seats that are not likely, in the light of the 1955 results, to be lost or won to the seats in the marginal class, but this is clearly impracticable. Nevertheless, the transfer of workers to constituencies where they would make the best contribution would have a considerable effect on the results.

Very often there are only a few active Labour workers in strong Tory seats, but

there are many Labour seats with substantial majorities where it would be possible to take away a number of active workers without jeopardising the seat.

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Such a transfer might result in a drop of a few hundred in the Labour majority, but if it resulted in an increase of a few hundred in the Labour vote in a marginal, it could easily result in the winning of the seat. The plans Regional Organisers are making require the co-operation of parties in safe seats and it is hoped that parochialism will not prove too strong for it to be given.

The immediate jobs to be done are (1) to win over waverers and uncommitted electors by conversion canvassing, public meetings and the distribution of literature; (2) the completion of the marked register, which will reveal not only opponents and supporters, but also who the waverers and the uncommitted are; (3) the adoption of a suitable Polling Day system and the training of workers in its use. Our success at the General Election will depend largely on what has been done beforehand, and there may not be much time left!

Mrs. Auld Retires

AFTER 17 years of service to the Labour Party as Scottish Women's Organiser, Mary Auld will retire shortly.

Mary was born in Dumfriesshire, and her early political experiences taught her a great deal about the problems of Party organisation in the countryside. Before taking up her staff appointment she had done a tremendous amount of voluntary work for the Labour Party. Much in Glasgow, but by no means all, for Mary was known throughout Scotland.

For 20 years she was active in the Cathcart Constituency Labour Party and its Women's Section. She was Chairman of the Glasgow Women's Advisory Council for 12 years, for some years was a member of the Executive Committee of the Glasgow City Party, and for nine years served on the Executive Committee of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party. She was Secretary of the Scottish Joint Committee of Labour, Co-operative and Trades Union Women for six years.

As a voluntary worker Mary Auld took a very special interest in the social services, and did a most valuable job in Glasgow in connection with nursery schools.

Party Members Are All Alive

BISHOP CREIGHTON is reported to have described some of his flock as being "as good as gold and fit for heaven, but of no earthly use". Pretty pointed, for a bishop, eh? But how often one hears the same sentiment, usually expressed, alas, much more crudely, from the lips of an irate Party officer, a chairman or secretary or what not.

"They take no interest—what's the use, we've tried everything—they won't come to meetings—they leave everything to just a handful—you can call round half-a-dozen times before they cough up their tanners—" *ad infinitum*, *ad nauseum*.

OF course, it does the chairman or secretary or what not a lot of good to let off steam, and when he has thus relieved himself (or as often as not it's herself) he/she goes on again fussing about with the humdrum tasks of a Party or a Section, inwardly proud of being a little martyr or a little hero/ine.

Perhaps it is not wasting this precious page to look a little more closely into the matter. It may be that all the fault does not lie with the seemingly inert members who are the bugbear of all of us. Possibly we don't know enough about them, and have never taken much trouble to find out about them. It's worth while. Of all the countless millions on earth, not one is exactly like another. And every one of the thousands of members of the Labour Party *had a reason for joining*. Find just what that reason was, and you will have gone some distance to countering what you call his 'apathy'.

In brief, the Party is not a mass; it consists of individual personalities, infinitely variegated, all having something they can give to the Party, but never precisely the same thing.

LET us study our members as persons of immeasurable interest and drop some of the generalities in common use. Even recently in Party meetings I have heard claptrap about 'the proletariat'. Where is this proletariat? I've looked

around, and I'm damned if I can find it.

The polysyllabic terms, 'proletariat' and 'bourgeoisie', were years ago fanciful classifications that were never very exact and today are almost meaningless. Look closely at any Labour Party of any size, and you will find a big assortment of social and financial grades, as well as striking contrasts of personalities. There may not be any zillionaires, but often there will be a sprinkling of 'well-to-do' who quite properly regard themselves as no whit superior to the fellow-member working for the Corporation who empties their trash-cans every Thursday.

And who shall dare to say which is the 'better' of the two? Particularly when, as sometimes happens, the professional man devotes a lot of his spare time to the pools and the dustman is a master of Planck's theory, these two profound subjects being their respective mental exercises.

Inertia? Apathy? Don't tell me! In recent weeks I have watched them going about the business of holiday-making and have marvelled at their vitality, the extremes of endurance of discomfort to which they will go, the ferocity with which they are determined to enjoy themselves.

THESE people by the million are not short of vigour; on the contrary they are bursting with nuclear energy. In the case of one per cent of our members we have harnessed that energy in the service of the Party, and they rejoice in it.

As to the remaining ninety-nine per cent, if many of them give no more active support to the Party than the tardy payment of their subs, maybe the fault lies more with us than with them. You don't raise a man's enthusiasm to boiling point by assuring him that the job you are asking him to do, whatever it is, is only a small one and won't take up much of his time. Tell him outright that the job is big and important; it will help him to feel big and important, and he'll do the job better for it.

PERSONAL CONTACT NECESSARY

THE writing of letters and circulars is part of an organiser's trade. The quality can never be too high, but the quantum can be overdone.

In any constituency where it is overdone, organisation is bound to suffer, for the more time an organiser devotes to 'paper work' the less can he or she give to organisation.

This article is therefore a frank plea for the minimum of typewritten and duplicating matter and the maximum of personal contact.

We may write knowledgeably and convincingly, but if we want to inspire action in the sphere of organisation there must be personal contact at the right place and time. No other medium of contact will suffice.

As Jeanie Deans says, in the *Heart of Midlothian* :

Writing winna do it : a letter canna look, and pray, and beg, and beseech, as the human voice can do to the human heart.

This is not an argument in favour of personal contact on every matter which crops up. That would be absurd. If a matter can be dealt with adequately by telephone or post then it should be dealt with in that way, for it saves both time and money.

This is about special matters: about action to get the electoral register marked up-to-date; about effective electoral organisation; about the need for arranging a membership campaign in a parish or ward; about the indispensable necessity of organising the postal vote; about a regular distribution of literature; about the essentiality of organising and developing Youth organisation; in fact, about any major issue on which action is essential to improve Party organisation. In all these matters more personal contact is required.

Think also of the value of personal contact to the officers of a very small party who work hard and long in some remote part of a huge county constituency. Often they work alone or, at

best, with two or three other comrades.

Personal contact is necessary to encourage them when they are disappointed; to share in the pleasure of their achievements, no matter how small; to stimulate flagging spirits maybe; to point the way and to act as guide and companion, if only for a while; to make them feel and believe that in their remoteness they yet belong to a great fellowship of men and women who are travelling towards the same goal.

Then, too, there is the business of forming entirely new units of organisation. And what a problem this presents in a county constituency! It is immense. But if we are to get our Labour Government and keep it we must form hundreds (yes, hundreds!) more units of organisation in every county in the land.

What is the use, pray, of finding out the names of a few persons and writing them to achieve a purpose of this kind! None at all. Having discovered our supporters, through devious ways maybe, it is essential to meet them, to talk to them, to persuade them, to instruct them, to exhort them, to counsel them, to organise them, and to help establish them as a keen and vigorous organism.

And this means visiting often. It cannot be done by writing only. It can only be done by constant contact of a personal kind.

The Tory Party knows all about this. They realise the need for organisation not only in each electoral division, but in each polling district as well. That is why in every marginal constituency they have three or more organisers and other paid personnel to our solitary one.

What has already been said about the need for personal contact most surely applies where a large number of members are already welded together in a unit of organisation. The aims and the technique of organisation must be

clearly and constantly explained and discussed. This can be done only by meeting those of our members upon whom we rely to fulfil the plans we have made, and we should always remember new members.

Plans often fail because of lack of discussion and on this matter it will be as well if we keep in mind what *Thucydides* said:

The great impediment to action is not discussion, but the want of that knowledge which is gained by discussion preparatory to action.

So if we would have full support and successful endeavour, frequent personal contact is essential with every unit of organisation in the constituency. Letters and circulars are of little avail, especially when they are too long! Many are too long, so they are not read.

In our Party, as in others, disputes arise on various matters, especially in connection with local government elections! It is usually futile to try and deal satisfactorily with disputes by writing.

Far better for the organiser to meet the members involved at a timely opportunity and discuss with them in a frank and friendly and knowledgeable way their difficulties and differences.

If the matter is tackled in this way, goodwill is usually restored and a solution found which safeguards the interests of the Party.

In the spheres of Party management and organisation the professional organiser is confronted with the need "to fill gaps, to soften the abrupt, to arrange the confused, to simplify the involved, to untie the knotty, to throw light on the obscure, and to say the same things in another way".

In his efforts to fulfil this need he must maintain continual personal contact with his fellow members.

Let no one think the writer is disparaging good office work. Office work is essential. It is in the office that plans are conceived and prepared, but it is in the ward and the village that they are carried out, and a good organiser will be as interested in the fulfilment of his plan as in the conception of it.

So he will want to be at the point of action to see that all goes well. There must, therefore, be personal contact all along the line.

W. T. YOUNG

No Vote For Many Service Wives Who Are Overseas

ONLY 40 per cent of Army and RAF wives serving overseas are registered as Service voters: this was the startling admission by the Government in answer to Parliamentary questions recently. As to the Navy, the Minister in the House of Lords replied blandly that the figure "is not readily available".

By way of excuse for this unsatisfactory state of affairs, the Minister took refuge in the argument that Service wives cannot be compelled to register, and therefore nothing more can be done without infringing "the liberty of the subject"—that principle which can be invoked so conveniently to defend inaction.

Certainly the machinery exists for wives, just before they go overseas, to register as Service voters and to appoint proxies; the fact that so many of them do not do so *may* be due to apathy or unwillingness, but it is at least as likely to be owing to ignorance or preoccupation with other matters at a time of domestic stress prior to embarkation.

Many people are scared at the sight of a buff form (the one in question, known as F/Vote/34, is not one of the simplest) and in the hectic days before she embarks—with packing, inoculations, clothing, quarters and the children to be thought of—the wife may be excused for failing to fill in the form.

She needs help and advice, and although the Minister believed that "in many cases COs make it their duty to explain to wives what the form involves", it is open to doubt how far this is really the case.

The remedy lies mainly in the hands of the Service authorities (who are, of course, susceptible to Parliamentary pressure), but Party workers can do their bit by constantly reminding wives of Service men of the need to register before they go overseas.

(Details of the system of registration and voting for Service men and their wives were given in articles in the Labour Organiser for June and July, 1956.)

APATHY TOOK A BELTING HERE

by B. V. Marjoram

WITH the local newspaper propped up between the milk jug and the cruet set, breakfast was being eaten with the customary silence, broken only by a constant rhythm of toast being devoured by four mouths in unison, when the 'discovery' was made. In an account of the Swaffham Rural District Council meeting the day before, were the words 'the resignation of Major B. . . . will cause a casual vacancy for Holme Hale. The election will be on July 31st.

Having got through the county council elections reasonably well, one gain, three seats retained, an attempt at two more held by 'Independents' (failing to win one of them by two votes, and the other in a draw) this seemed an ideal chance for another trial run for our organisation.

FIRST STEPS

Having washed down my toast with the best Co-op tea, I put on my jacket, I dashed to the office, which I could now do in five seconds dead, the office being a room at the end of my abode.

Then came the snags. Never before had a Rural District Council election been fought with official Labour candidates. Nothing so vulgar as Party politics in our local government.

Second snag, there was no organisation in the village concerned, only a labour 'contact', who was recorded as 'willing to sell Christmas draw tickets (five books)'.

Snag number three, no candidate.

Having closed the office at 1 p.m. (all letter heads bearing the words 'ring Swaffham 407 between 9.15 and 1 p.m., one member was heard to remark 'What does the agent do in the remaining 20 hours each day?') the search for the candidate begun.

This did not prove as difficult as was at first thought. The chairman of a neighbouring Local Labour Party ex-

pressed his willingness to stand, and the members of his party gave him their 'blessing'. So far so good, we had an official Labour candidate in the field. The Tory 'grapevine' was working, and it was not long before the chairman of the local Conservative branch was known to be standing as an 'Independent'.

ONLY CONTACT

Now what about organisation? I had a chat with my 'draw ticket selling contact' and told him what I wanted. He agreed there might be something in this 'organisation lark' after all. The last Labour chappy (unofficial) he told me, received three votes, which did not seem to be a very good omen.

It was impossible to get a proper committee room, as all the women were at work in the field, so I settled for the back porch of a house next door to the school (equipped it with a chair and a card table, and appointed my wife 'committee room clerk'. My 'contact' had now become my 'village organiser', and under this title agreed to take a day off work to poll check.

My candidate turned out a brick. He canvassed every house and secured 104 'promises'. An election address went to every household, except known Tory diehards, of the type peculiar to the country. An extension of the poll was secured, as most of our 'promises' were working until 8.30 p.m. Window bills went up, and 'Vote Labour' posters were displayed.

The big day arrived. The sun shone, which meant more of our 'promises' a work than ever before. The loudspeaker came out and I did a grand tour of the fields, training my speaker down the rows of currant bushes.

Knocking-up started at tea-time, which had to be a rush job as men and women would be going back to work within a half an hour, or so. And, of course, there was the periodic reminder from the loudspeaker that 'today is Polling Day, etc., etc.'

My daughter, aged nine, acted as a mobile baby sitter for 'promises' who could not leave the youngster, and the

'committee room clerk' had to leave her 'committee room' for 20 minutes to sit with a lady who was ill, so that her husband could vote.

At five minutes to nine we stopped knocking-up. The last people to vote were those living on top of the polling station. I went to our 'committee room' to check the figures.

Of the 104 'promises' made, 90 had been redeemed. Half the unredeemed 'promises' had a good reason for not voting, sickness, etc. The poll was 75 per cent, and if all our 'promises' were truthful 'promises', it looked as if we had won.

RESULT DECLARED

At 9.20 p.m. the result was declared—'Independent' 94, Labour 74. It looked as if 16 of our redeemed 'promises' had changed their minds between the canvass and voting. Apparently they had decided to vote for the local 'independent'. After all, our chap was a *foreigner*. He lived in the next village, two miles away!

Although we lost, the effort was worth it. Our greatest enemy 'apathy' took a belting. The chance of forming another local party is open because of the extra 'contacts' made, and the idea of official Labour candidates has come to stay in S.W. Norfolk.

Notts Miners' Record

by J. CATTERMOLÉ

ONE often hears complaints about the lack of support given to the Party by the Trade Union movement.

It is usually conceded that at national level Trade Unions contribute generously in £ s. d., but it is claimed that what the Party really needs are individuals at local and constituency party level who will not only work, but also will serve the Party in Local Government.

Whilst this criticism may be true in some areas, it is certainly not true of the Nottingham Area of the National Union of Mineworkers.

We were recently approached to give a list to the union of their members serving on local authorities. We therefore asked our constituencies to let us have the required details. When the information came in, the numbers of miners

who were councillors surprised the writer. The following are the figures:

Authorities	Miners
County Councils ...	13
Borough Councils ...	1
Urban District Councils ...	35
Rural District Councils ...	25
	—
	74

It should be remembered that Nottinghamshire is not a single industry county, and also has hosiery, engineering and agriculture. In addition, a large number of people from the county travel into Nottingham each day to work.

The union contribute most generously to national political funds as well as to appeals sent by the East Midlands Regional Council. Whether the request has been for a grant for a by-election, for Local elections, or for a miners' choir, or band, for a function being organised by the Regional Council, the Union always has responded most generously.

It gives us the use of a marquee at its annual gala to stage a show of Party literature and to recruit individual members to the Party. A year or so ago it gave a silver rose bowl to be used as a Membership Trophy which is awarded annually to the best local party in a membership competition.

The immediate past chairman of the Regional Council is a nominee of the union and sits on the Regional Executive Committee. The present Chairman of the Nottinghamshire County Council is a retired official of the union. Many local parties are officered by miners.

Of course, a lot more miners could join the Party and play their part, but nevertheless the union and its members are playing a large part in the activities of the Labour Party in Nottinghamshire and we are very grateful to them.

CONFERENCE ACCOMMODATION 1958

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THESE FIGURES ARE VALUABLE

IN the bustle of an election campaign it is almost impossible to record or tabulate the mass of information that will pass through the agent's office. Yet, unless an effort is made to keep these figures and percentages the job will never be done, particularly in county constituencies covering a hundred or more scattered polling districts.

All too often statistical information is missing from Labour Party records. What little knowledge exists is usually kept in the agent's head, and this is not the safest of places, while Labour agents come and go as frequently as they do.

So often the agent knows, from hard practical experience, the degree of organisation and the political complexion of each of his polling districts, but when he leaves the new man must start from scratch and build up his own mental picture, often only as a result of many months' work and organisation.

After each Parliamentary by-election that has taken place in county constituencies in the Eastern Region since the war, it has been possible to produce a comprehensive analysis of polling, canvassing and absent voters' lists.

This has consisted of figures and percentages tabulated against each polling district under the following headings :

- (a) *Polling District.*
- (b) *Total number of electors.*
- (c) *Number of electors who voted at Polling Station.*
- (d) *Percentage poll.*
- (e) *Number of electors accounted for in canvass.*
- (f) *Number of Labour promises obtained in canvass.*
- (g) *Percentage of electors who promised support.*
- (h) *Number of electors on Absent Voters' Lists.*
- (i) *Estimated number of Labour Postal Voters.*
- (j) *Number of Postal Vote applications submitted via Central Committee Rooms.*

In addition, an indication has been given of the degree of organisation secured in each polling district, ranging from 'scratch' polling day organisation to established Committee Room set-ups, which are indicated on the analysis by the use of initials.

When this information is listed under

these headings for each polling district a picture emerges that should be of value to the agent and to key-workers in the following ways :

- (1) Assessing the political complexion of each area;
- (2) Judging the degree of organisation existing (as opposed to what the local secretary or contact has been trying to tell you);
- (3) Showing what work has been done on postal vote registration and what remains to be done;
- (4) Spot-lighting the polling districts where membership campaigns could most usefully be undertaken;
- (5) Showing the areas where specialised literature distributions can most profitably take place;
- (6) The areas with sufficient support to attempt the formation of local parties; etc., etc.

Possibly this kind of analysis is prepared regularly in most compact borough constituencies. But the task is more arduous in the counties yet, equally, the information to be derived from such an analysis can be of immense benefit.

Arthur Clare

• **FRIENDLY SERVICE**

• **FAIR PRICES**

and of course the

• **DIVIDEND**

*That's another
sign of the*

**LONDON
CO-OP**

We Pay Canvassers and Collectors

IN 1954 and 1955 we were faced with a decline in membership and subscriptions collected, a situation we could not afford in view of the 1955 election results. We were definitely a marginal constituency. Wellingborough, with an 86 per cent poll, had only just managed to return a Labour Member of Parliament, George Lindgren. There was no doubt that we needed more members, more money, and better organisation.

We had a little in the bank, which it was intended should be spent on premises, as and when the occasion arose. But, after much opposition, it was at last agreed that a small proportion of this—the interest—be spent on improving organisation.

A scheme was drawn up, whereby we were to employ two canvassers, at the rate of 4s. per hour, to work not more than 12 hours a week, mainly in the evenings. The canvassers would obtain information for the 'marked register' and recruit members. Collectors would be paid at the rate of 3s. in the £, and would, in most cases, be directly responsible to the office. Seventy-five per cent of the subscriptions collected would be retained by the constituency, but out of this amount membership cards and commission would be paid.

Strong Opposition

Opposition was strong—we would lose our voluntary workers, they said. At last, after amending the commission clause to allow collectors to return commission as a donation to their local parties and drawing up a programme for voluntary workers to undertake, the scheme was agreed.

Collecting on a commission basis commenced almost at once. Old age pensioners, invalids, young married women with small children were approached, and gradually the collecting system was built up. There are plenty of snags, people die or move, and other collectors have to be found, but it is easy to get a voluntary worker to take on collecting for a short period until these snags have been overcome.

It was not until May, 1956, that we managed to find a suitable canvasser, and then only one. We did not spend anything like the amount we had expected, but results were satisfactory. In 142 hours our canvasser called at 3,192



The Labour Party relies greatly on voluntary unpaid effort, but this is not always enough to do our work properly. The Agent of the Wellingborough Party here describes an experiment in paying canvassers and collectors.



houses, obtained information from 6,384 electors, joined 189 new members, collected £6 15s. 6d. subscriptions—all at a cost of £28 8s. Quite an achievement, we thought.

Collections Up

With the follow-up of the paid collectors, our membership in Rushden increased by 241 in 1956, and subscriptions by £50. There was the normal slight drop in membership in 1957, but the amount collected increased by a further £25. The average collection in Rushden for 1957 was 5s. 3d. per member, in 1955 it had been only 2s. 1d. Wollaston, where our canvasser worked in September and October, 1956, enrolled 21 new members, collections increased by £13, and an average of 5s. 9d. per member is now collected.

There are still a few villages where we have not achieved the results we want, but throughout the constituency (between 1955 and 1957) our membership has increased by 605, and our subscriptions collected by £183.

We may not have the complete answer to the membership problem. Our scheme only partly worked. We expected grand results and met with 25 per cent success. Our target is still 5,000 members. We do have more workers, membership and organisation are now discussed by our Executive and General Committees almost as much as the policy of the Party, and it has become a habit.

With the local elections over we are again concentrating on the 'marked register' and membership, and our hopes are high for winning the Regional membership shield for the third year in succession.

DOREEN SMITH

AN ATTEMPT TO UNIFY LABOUR

by S. E. Barker

BEN TURNER presided over the 12th Annual Conference, held in Birmingham Town Hall, in 1912. Although the number of affiliated members had grown from 1,430,539 to 1,539,092, the number of trade unions affiliated had fallen from 151 to 141.

This decline was chiefly due to the Osborne Judgment. The law this Judgment laid down was still operating, and Conference called upon Members of Parliament and Labour Candidates to work unceasingly to undo what was rightly regarded as a grave legal injustice.

Four By-Elections

Labour had no gains in the four by-elections held during the previous year in North East Lanarkshire, Kilmarnock Burghs, Keighley and Oldham. Nevertheless, the results confirmed that the Party was gaining a very firm grip, since Willie Anderson and W. C. Robinson, the Labour candidates, had done extremely well in Keighley and Oldham respectively.

The National Executive Committee placed before Conference proposals relating to unification of Labour's forces. The following resolutions which had already been passed by the Trades Union Congress and the General Federation of Trade Unions, were accepted by Conference after considerable discussion.

That the present practice of three Annual Conferences held at separate times of the year is expensive, leads to much waste of effort and to divergence of policy, and the amalgamation of the national bodies, without delay, should be aimed at.

That a scheme for a central building, in Westminster, to be used by the Labour Movement should be prepared.

That a Committee be appointed to consider ways and means for the above proposals, and to report to a

joint meeting of these Executives within the next three months, with a view to its submission to the three national conferences.

Time tells the rest of the story.

Another very interesting paragraph in the year's report relates to a daily newspaper. During the year the Independent Labour Party had agitated its branches on this subject, with the result that the Labour Newspaper Committee, set up the previous year, together with four members of the National Administrative Council of the I.L.P. formed a joint committee to work out details and ascertain what financial backing was likely.

Circulars had been published, solicitors and counsel selected, a Board of Directors appointed, and a prospectus and memorandum of association were now ready for use. Ramsay MacDonald, Arthur Henderson and E. R. Pease, of the Fabian Society, were appointed as directors representing the Labour Party. J. R. Clynes, John Hodge, and W. C. Robinson had been temporarily appointed to represent the Trade Unions.

MacDonald introduced this section of the report and stressed the enormous responsibility a daily newspaper would mean. Capital was asked for to the tune of £150,000. Promises to the extent of £60,000 had already been made by the Trade Unions.

Generous Support

John Hill, of the United Society of Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilders, speaking enthusiastically in support of the newspaper, predicted that generous support would be forthcoming if it were made quite clear that the paper would be safeguarded and controlled forever by the Labour Party.

Some strong feeling was expressed about the *Daily Herald*, which had

published its prospectus. Arthur Henderson said there had been reference to there being 'two Richmonds in the field'. He pointed out there was only one 'Richmond' in the field so far as the national organisations were concerned, and those connected with 'the other Richmond' appeared to be acting inconsistently. He was very critical of the Parliamentary Labour Party, which had associated itself with the *Daily Herald* by appointing two of its members to its Board of Management.

Two Dailies

C. W. Bowerman, M.P., intervened to remove any misapprehension which Mr. Henderson's remarks might have raised. He assured Conference that the appointment of two delegates to an unofficial Board of Management of another newspaper by the Parliamentary Labour Party did not mean that this body was taking sides. It felt there should be ample room for two or more Labour newspapers in the country.

G. H. Roberts, M.P., spoke enthusiastically in support of Labour's official paper. He contended that while there might be room for more than one Labour newspaper there was no proof that there was *support* for a number. Two schemes competing for capital, two schemes involving distinct sets of expenditure was not a sound economic proposition, and he called for support for the official Labour newspaper.

Bob Smillie, speaking for the Miners, said although his Union had not yet had time to discuss investment in the proposed official paper, the Union delegates at Conference were supporting the proposition. Conference after conference had discussed this subject—at last it appeared that something tangible was to materialise.

Financial Problems

Labour's finances were very carefully reviewed at this Conference. The position was improving, but the Party's responsibilities were growing at a rapid pace, and clearly something had to be done to increase income. The Parliamentary Fund

was no longer necessary as Members of Parliament were at last being paid. The National Executive Committee proposed that this fund be disposed of by taking 6,000 shares of £1 each in Labour Newspapers' Ltd., and that the remainder should be transferred to the Party's General Fund.

The cost of managing the Party in 1910 was £2,412. This did not include expenditure on literature, as sales on the average were covering costs, nor did it include the cost of the Annual Conference, which in those days was defrayed by delegates' fees. Now that the maintenance allowance to Members of Parliament was no longer required the only contribution which the National Executive Committee was making towards Parliamentary expenses was 25 per cent of the total cost of a General Election.

Agents' Grants

It was felt that some additional help should be given to local parties by way of grants to those employing full-time agents. It was proposed that these grants should not exceed 25 per cent of the agent's salary, and were to be subject to the following conditions: (a) that the National Executive Committee approve the appointment; (b) that it was satisfied with the work of the agent.

Where there was a Labour Member of Parliament, but no full-time agent, it was proposed to assist by giving free literature in connection with registration and organisation.

The National Executive Committee asked Conference to amend the Constitution so that the sole charge on affiliated Trade Unions should be one penny per member per year, with a minimum payment of ten shillings per organisation per year. The fees for Trades Councils and local Labour Parties were to remain the same.

Philip Snowden led a spirited attack on this proposition. He said if the argument held good that the affiliated organisations could not raise more than one penny per member by voluntary contributions, then the Labour Party was not worth the trouble. He was largely responsible for its reference back.

Amended Proposal

The National Executive Committee next morning put forward an amended pro-

posals recommending that the affiliation fees for Trade Unions and Socialist Societies should be twopence per member per year, with a minimum of twenty shillings per year. This was debated heatedly.

Many Trade Union delegates pointed out the hardship this payment would cause, and that Trade Unionists had many commitments besides the help which they were giving to the Labour Party. Finally, the original proposal of an affiliation fee based on one penny per member per year, with a minimum fee of ten shillings per year was carried by an overwhelming majority.

Ramsay MacDonald

For the sake of the historical record, it must be recalled that Ramsay MacDonald resigned the Secretaryship of the Party, bringing to an end a chapter in the history of our Party. Whatever may be said of his later actions it would be churlish to ignore the great service he had rendered when the Party was in the

making. He helped to build its foundations so strongly that no later action of his was able to destroy them.

Keir Hardie presented to MacDonald portraits in oils of himself and his late wife. In speaking of Margaret Ethel MacDonald, Keir Hardie described her as a remarkable personality, who, with sheer unassuming worth, found her way into the hearts and minds of all who knew her. It was, he said, 'sweet strength' which gave Margaret MacDonald her wonderful power and influence.

MacDonald was not, however, to leave the National Executive Committee. Up to that time the Treasurer had been elected by the National Executive Committee from among its members. Conference not only agreed to amend the Constitution so that in future the Treasurer should be elected by Conference, but also agreed there and then to the election of MacDonald as Treasurer. Arthur Henderson was unanimously elected as Secretary to succeed MacDonald.

No New Regional Council

THERE is not to be a new Northern Home Counties Regional Council. The National Executive Committee reached this decision following consultations with the bodies which were directly concerned with the proposal.

Opinion was about equally divided, but the bulk of the opposition came from the Middlesex Constituency Labour Parties which wished to continue their association with the London Labour Party.

The National Executive Committee had no desire to proceed with the proposal in the face of the opposition from Middlesex, and a new Regional Council is impracticable without that county's strong trade union organisations being included.

However, the National Executive Committee has decided that the 54 constituencies in the counties of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex and Oxfordshire should be formed into a new organising area, and a Regional Organiser will be appointed to look after them.

Constituency Labour Parties and other

organisations in the area will continue their affiliation with the existing Regional Councils and will participate in their activities as at present.

The newly appointed Regional Organiser will be responsible for organisation, Parliamentary candidatures, agency appointments and all the other duties which were undertaken by Regional Organisers before Regional Councils were formed.

This arrangement will provide more direct organising help to the 54 constituencies, and this is of great importance because 19 marginals are included. In addition, it will be possible for the Regional Organising staff in the London, Southern, Eastern and West Midlands Regions to give more attention to the smaller number of constituencies for which they now will have organising responsibility.

It is not intended to appoint an additional Women's Organiser and the work of the Women's Sections will continue to be supervised by the existing Regional Women's Organisers.

All Ready For Polling Day

This article concludes a series of five describing the 'Reading' electoral system. It tells what is done in Reading on polling day, as the culmination of persistent and planned effort over many months

PLANNING the Polling Day work (particularly allotting jobs so as to get the Polling Districts manned to the required strength) is a Ward Organiser's job. He knows the requirements of each Polling District from the number of Labour voters to be fetched out, distances from the Polling Station and other factors of a similar sort.

Against the relative claims of the P.D.'s, he sets the total resources in workers and he'll end up with a schedule for each Polling District (*see below*).

It's a very good thing if the Ward Organiser can get all the workers together at one short meeting just before Polling Day. The Committee Room workers, knockers-up, messengers and number-takers can then go steadily through the routine—times of change-over for number-takers, areas for knocking-up teams, duties of messengers, and so on.

Polling Day will still not be quite clock-work, but a lot of confusion and time-wasting will be avoided.

The advantage of our six-fold knocking-up lists is that they allow for five rounds of knocking-up and a committee room copy, without any inter-

ference with marking off in the Committee Room.

Experience has shown beyond any reasonable doubt that this repeated knocking-up is vital. So vital that, in any marginal election, it is highly desirable to get six, not five, rounds of knocking-up done.

This can be done by using the register — which is in the form of a knocking-up list when the procedure under 'Preparing the knocking-up Lists' has been carried out.

So this is the time-table:

MORNING.—One round, using the register.

AFTERNOON.—One round, using the top sheet of the knocking-up lists.

EVENING.—Four rounds beginning at 6 p.m., 6.45, 7.30 and 8.15.

It's the Ward Organiser's job to divide up the total knockers-up for the Ward as between the Polling Districts, first of all, and then to re-organise teams in each of the Polling Districts.

Let's take an average sort of Polling District—2,400 electors, 1,200 of them Labour in 600 houses in 20 streets. And let's suppose there are six knockers-up available in the daytime and twelve in the evening.

The best way to organise for knocking-up in this particular case is prob-

P.D. .. Battle 1		POLLING DAY WORKERS			
	Committee Room	Knockers-up	Cars	Number-takers	Messengers
MORNING ..	1	4	1	1	1
AFTERNOON ..	1	6	1	1	1
EVENING ..	2	12	4	1	1

ably to divide the Polling District into three sub-areas of approximately 200 Labour houses, each with its team under a team-leader.

Each team keeps the same area all of Polling Day and each team has a messenger allotted to it. His job (in addition to carrying the completed number-sheets from the Polling Station to the Committee Room) is to keep the team-leader fed with new knocking-up lists as directed by the Committee Room Manager.

There are two vital points to bear in mind about the knocking-up team.

One is that the team-leader is in charge. New knocking-up lists, messages about cars, etc., should go to him or her. Some one person must be in charge.

The other is that, if a team and its leader don't keep close together, chaos will follow, with everybody chasing everybody around the Polling District. For this reason, only one or two streets should be dealt with at a time and everybody in the team should know where the next meeting point is.

Knocking-up lists handed out to members of the team must be given back to the leader when the street is finished. On receiving a new batch of knocking-up lists from the Committee Room, the team-leader destroys the old ones and continues that round of knocking-up on the new ones. It would be a waste of time and effort not to change over.

Cars for conveying electors to the poll are used in three ways:

POLLING DISTRICT .. REDLANDS 3 KNOCKING-UP SCHEDULE				
Team	Street-Group	Labour Houses	Day Team (to 6 p.m.)	Evening Team (after 6 p.m.)
A	1. Lavender Street ..	41	J. Fryer (leader) Mrs. F. Jones	J. Fryer (leader) Mrs. F. Jones W. Kemp Mrs. R. Turner
	2. Sherman Road ..	17		
	3. Frampton Avenue ..	14		
	4. Aldermaston Road ..	14		
	5. Newbury Street ..	20		
	6. Battle Street ..	6		
	7. Castle Street ..	8		
	8. Hosier Road ..	27		
	9. North Street ..	32		
	10. West Avenue ..	20		
		199		
B	1. Cranbury Road ..	82	Miss J. Morris (leader) Miss M. Tudor	Miss. J. Morris (leader) F. Trump W. R. Davidson Mrs. A. Morris
	2. Montrose Road ..	47		
	3. Hope Street ..	20		
	4. Welsh Street ..	55		
		204		
C	1. Battle Crescent ..	43	J. Harvey (leader) F. Morse	J. Harvey (leader) Miss F. Dance W. Morrison I. Lee
	2. East Street ..	33		
	3. Minster Street ..	31		
	4. Victoria Street ..	17		
	5. Manor Road ..	54		
	6. Wellington Street ..	19		
		197		

FOR REMOVALS. Removal cars work from the Central Office. Each driver gets the top copy of a removal schedule (illustrated under 'Preparing Removals Lists') from the Office, together with a map. The driver is asked to do three things :

- (a) keep as near to the times stated as he can.
- (b) keep the score himself by crossing off the names and numbers as he takes supporters to vote,
- (c) phone the Central Office, if possible, either if anything should happen to put him out of action, or if he is running badly behind schedule. In either case, it may be possible to put another car on the job.

FOR ARRANGED CALLS. The driver works strictly on a list showing picking-up times.

FOR OTHER LABOUR VOTERS. These cars are allotted to knocking-up teams in whatever proportion is suggested by distances from the Polling Station and numbers of Labour voters. The drivers work closely with team-leaders and report to the Committee Room once every hour for any change of area.

It's the Ward Organiser's job to see to it, not only that some one member is *in charge* of every Committee Room and all that goes on in it, but that that member 'knows the ropes'.

The simplest way is to spend an hour or so on the eve of poll, when the Committee Room is ready for action, running through the items of equipment and their uses.

Besides two chairs and the obvious items of stationery, e.g. notebooks, pencils, rulers, ball-point pens, rubbers, drawing-pins, paper-clips — there should be :

1. **THE KNOCKING-UP LISTS**, pinned to boards laid flat on a table. The lists must obviously be arranged so that the numbers run consecutively. Each list is headed with the name of the street and with the first and last electoral number on the sheet. There's also a letter prominently shown.

This is the letter of the knocking-up team for that street, put there so that the Committee Room Manager can quickly spot the sheets for each team and have them ready for the messenger to take out to the team-leader.

The copies of the knocking-up list, incidentally, are coloured and the Commit-

tee Room Manager can see at a glance which round is being done by a team at the moment. The aim is two rounds in the daytime and four in the evening, so this is how the boards will look at various times :

10.30 a.m.	White.	The register is out.
2.30 p.m.	Pink.	Top copy (white) is out.
6.15 p.m.	Blue.	2nd copy (pink) is out.
7.00 p.m.	Buff.	3rd copy (blue) is out.
7.45 p.m.	Green.	4th copy (buff) is out.
8.30 p.m.	Backing-sheet.	5th copy (green) is out.

The purpose of the first and last electoral numbers at the head of the sheet is to help in spotting numbers quickly. As the completed Polling Check Sheets come in from the Polling Station, the numbers and names of Labour voters are ruled off the knocking-up lists as fast as possible.

At the same time, every number on the Polling Check Sheet that appears on the knocking-up lists is marked 'X'. When all the numbers on the Polling Check Sheet have been dealt with, the summary at the foot is filled in.

The top copy (put on a spike file or in a clip) will always tell the Committee Room Manager the latest number of Labour promises kept. On this will depend whether he contacts the Ward Organiser and/or the Agent for any help that may be transferable.

Only one other piece of information about the 'state of the Poll' is of great importance—streets where Labour voters are 'not coming out'. A glance at the knocking-up lists is enough to show it. On this will depend whether the Committee Room Manager transfers knockers-up and/or cars from one team-area to another.

2. **THE KNOCKING-UP SCHEDULE**, showing the team-areas, team-leaders and team-members.

3. **A NUMBER OF MAPS OF THE POLLING DISTRICT**, showing streets, sub-areas, the Polling Station and Committee Room.

4. **A LIST OF ARRANGED CAR-TIMES** for the driver on this job.

5. **A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF POLLING CHECK SHEET PADS.**

6. **WINDOW BILLS AND CAR-SLIPS** for handing out to drivers.

7. **A LIST OF CARS AND DRIVERS**, showing the allocation to knocking-up areas.

(Check sheet on page 178)

NEW CANDIDATES AND AGENTS

Candidates

THE following were endorsed as prospective Parliamentary Candidates by the National Executive Committee recently:

Altrincham & Sale	Mr. N. Atkinson
Stockport South ...	Mr. S. Orme
Bishop Auckland ..	Mr. H. J. Boyden
Maldon	Mr. S. G. Richards
Southend-on-Sea	
East	Mr. E. J. Trevett
Canterbury	Mr. D. Curtiss
East Surrey	Mr. J. C. Hunt
Brighton, Pavilion	Mr. R. G. White
Chichester	Mr. W. E. Simpkins
Horsham	Mr. A. E. Pegler
Edinburgh South ..	Mr. A. D. Reid
Edinburgh West ...	Mr. J. K. Stocks
Roxburgh, Selkirk	
& Peebles	Mr. T. Dalyell

★

WITHDRAWAL OF CANDIDATURE

Bexley	Mr. M. Mason
South Dorset ...	Mr. G. Burden
Hove	Mr. H. F. Parker

Agents

THE following Agency appointments have been approved by the National Executive Committee:

MR. G. E. ELLIOTT to **Burton-on-Trent**. A sheet metal worker, aged 55, George Elliott has been a member of the Party for 37 years. He has had considerable experience in local party management, having been a secretary for more than 12 years and a Labour councillor for 18 years.

MR. J. HOLT to **Hitchin**. John Holt, formerly full-time agent at Rossendale from 1952 to 1957, returns to the agency service after a break of 18 months, during which time he was employed as a sales representative. He is 27 years of age.

MR. R. E. MORRIS to **Chichester**. From Exeter, where he has been an active member of the Party for eight years, Roy Morris, a toolmaker, aged 26, fills this vacancy.

MR. H. NAIRN to **Dorking**. Henry Nairn was appointed as secretary/agent to

the Colne Valley Constituency Labour Party, on completing the full-time agent's training course in December, 1957. He is 36 years of age and has been a member of the party for eight years.

MR. T. R. E. PUGH to **Cambridgeshire**. Terence Pugh, from Walthamstow, fills the new agency post at Cambridgeshire. He is 23 years of age and acted as a sub-agent in the recent by-election at Weston-super-Mare.

MR. P. H. THOMPSON to **Coventry Borough**. An assistant buyer in the Steel Industry, Peter Thompson is 32 years old. A member of the Party for 10 years, he was local party secretary at Whickham in the Blaydon Constituency, and has acted as agent at county and urban district elections.

MR. P. A. WILSON to **Hertford**. For the past few months Peter Wilson, of Birkenhead, has been assisting, in a full-time capacity, the building up of party organisation in the Liverpool area. He is 31 years of age.

(See page 177)

POLLING CHECK SHEET PLEASE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- (1) Record the number of every voter;
- (2) Send completed sheets to Committee Room;
- (3) Do not leave Station with no Labour number-taker.

1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14
5	15
6	16
7	17
8	18
9	19
10	20

COMMITTEE ROOM

Time
Labour voters on this sheet
Total of Labour voters from previous sheet
TOTAL

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Can now be supplied from stock at the following reduced prices
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